

2 August 1966

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Meeting with IDA-WSHG Representatives on Logistic Support to Enemy Troops in South Vietnam, held at CIA Headquarters, 1 August 1966, 1:30 p.m.

Present:

IDA-WSHG  
Mr. Albert M. Botton  
Mr. Paul J. Schweitzer  
Mr. Leonard Weinstein  
Mr. James C. Armstrong

T/IR

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1. The conference was the third between representatives of T/IR and IDA/WSHG. (See Memorandums for the Record, dated 25 July 1966 and 1 August 1966).

2. The IDA-WSHG representatives were interested in the sources and methodology used by analysts in CIA and the intelligence components of the military services in calculating logistic requirements of enemy forces in South Vietnam. Questions were asked on the following principal subjects:

- a. The derivation of the calculation of the basic load of ammunition carried by an enemy battalion.
- b. The methodology used in distinguishing between internal and external requirements of enemy troops.
- c. The data available on damage and destruction to enemy stockpiles.
- d. The methodology used in the calculation of the rate of combat of enemy troops.
- e. Capacities and use of the Laotian infiltration corridor.
- f. The methodology used in the determination of the quantity of supplies flowing into South Vietnam for enemy troops, as opposed to the quantity of supplies needed by enemy troops.

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3. In addition, the IDA-WSEB representatives directed questions to the reliability of the data used in logistic calculations and to the validity of the methodologies used. The points raised by IDA-WSEB have been raised in the various intra- and inter-agency discussions of enemy logistics in South Vietnam.

4. These personnel of IDA-WSEB had obviously done their home work. They have talked to a large number of people in DIA and other intelligence components of the Department of Defense. They appeared to regard themselves as members of the "Inquisition" with license to tear to shreds all estimates in the logistics field. They were not so much interested in discussing sources and methods as they apparently were in obtaining our concurrence in their view that all estimates in the logistics area are suspect. Under the circumstances we probably failed to give them what they were seeking. We had an understanding in advance that we would not sell out estimates short, or be critical of our colleagues in other agencies.

5. We pointed out that there probably is a margin of error in the logistics estimates, but based on our analysis they provide a proper order of magnitude. This condition pertains not only to estimates of internal and external requirements for the Communist forces in South Vietnam, but also to estimates of truck traffic in Laos. On the road watch program, questions were asked that should properly only be answered by the ID/P desk officer, if at all, and so they were not answered. I did say, however, that the road watch program does provide the best single source of information on truck traffic in Laos.

6. They also asked how CIA's responsibility in reporting on logistics differs from that of the intelligence components of the Department of Defense and if there is any division in responsibility in this field. To this question we answered that we are called on to provide our superiors with estimates and recommendations on the appropriateness of estimates provided by other components, from time to time, and this accounts for our interest in the subject. The IDA-WSEB personnel observed that there appeared to be an undue reliance on MACV for estimates in this field. They spent quite some time discussing the current rate of combat estimate as an example of this dependence.

7. No documents were shown to the IDA-WSEB representatives and no commitments were made except the following:

- a. I promised to see whether I could provide information on the number of days we had observations of truck traffic in Laos during the 1965-1966 dry season.

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- b. I promised also to determine whether I could provide information on the level of truck traffic in Laos during the 1966 rainy season.

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